

!KUNG

[55 cont.]

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[124]

WHATEVER I COULD GET FROM MY individual informants I took down with the exactness of a trained scientist, faithful to the letter and with due regard for all precautions. From these notations I have drawn the inevitable conclusion that a benign supreme being is a reality in their world picture.

776 surrounding Hei//om tribes, [56] for they use the word Somseb.
171 We should sooner think of Huwe. Huwe or Hue was what the !Kung Bushmen of Tsumeb examined by Vedder called the supreme being. I also know the expression Chuwa from the Bushmen of Ukuambi. This supreme being is conceived of in human form; 776 it looks like a Bushman and also speaks Kung. He lives in the sky 772 in a house that has two floors; his wife, whose name is unknown, lives on the lower floor, as well as many children. The souls [775] of the deceased live on the upper floor. "The house" (it is supposed to be similar to, but not entirely like a Bushman wind-screen) "is hairy on the outside, like a caterpillar." There are various things up there, but only a single house, namely, that of the captain. Honey, crickets, and fat flies are there in great abundance. The great captain lives on them. In addition, there are a great many butterflies. The following are regarded as the 776 functions of this supreme being:

1. In the opinion of some, the great captain made the sun, moon, and everything. In the opinion of others, the highest of the spirits, /Nawa, did this.

2. The great captain calls the doctors to their calling and gives them supernatural power.

3. He is the lord of the rain and the lightning.

4. Through the highest of the spirits he sends luck on the hunt or on the search for veldkost.

5. When someone thinks or speaks ill of him, he punishes [688] him with lightning. He is not concerned about the other activities of his Bushman children, however, unless someone swears falsely.

● 695 The Kung have a regular oath, and one of my informants reported 776 the following to me:

When a group goes hunting and one of the participants is

!KONG

[56 cont.]

- 695 not seen for the duration of the hunt, he is suspected of having
776 sneaked away. Then he swears by the great captain nu Xu, and
all believe him.

776 Ordinarily, however, the great captain has everything
taken care of by the highest of the spirits and lesser spirits. The
chief concern of the Bushmen, therefore, is to stay in the good
graces of these spirits, but the great captain does offer protection
against all evil spirits, and for that reason people turn to him

[782] with the following prayers in case of severe illness and before the
start of a journey:

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[539] Xu, Xu hui mi, //kai tsao mi
to 'oba !khu !gaise fani u mi
/nāna /ge a
/nore gana ti /ge a gana ti tsa
/Nane /ā mi tsu (1)

Lord, Lord, help me, raise me.
"the lord shall lead me well
to the place,
where I am going, and he shall
lead me back well, so that I
come home safely."

1. Notation of the Dama interpreter.

- [224] Before the hunt the doctors pray to the great captain for
hunting luck. There is no doubt that the Bushmen conceive of
this "great captain" as an all-powerful and at the same time
benign being. His executive organ, as has been noted, is the
highest of the Gauab. The latter is called "the Gauab" by the
common people, but he has a name known only by the doctors,
and saying it may have serious consequences. Since I finally
[123] had the honor to be regarded as an equal by the doctors, I learned
his name. He is called /Nawa. They were unable to give me
an interpretation of this name, but Miss Bleek, from dance songs
of the Angola Kung, reports the word /Nwa-se, supposedly an
abbreviation for Nwima-se = new moon. According to this, we
[174] might be able to see in this chief Gauab the high god of a lunar-
[771] mythological religion which has been superimposed as a foreign
element upon the primitive monotheism of the Xu or Huwe faith.
As is always the case in such matters, the supreme being of the
invading religion has been transformed into a more or less evil
[171] principle. It also functions as such in the belief of the Nama and

[59 cont.]

19. Dance Songs

I was able to take down a few dances:

1. Dance Song for the Wedding

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ee ga ee /nuia khe e /goaro be We are singing of the child. (Repeat.)

2. Pantomimic Eland Dance

X'ai /nui !gaa u da !gaa
ts-ii !gowara //goe

Runner with arrow poison in his body
Do you run with a heavy head.

The elephant dance, curiously enough, is sung with the refrain: "The Ovambo girl goes around between the men."

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The !Kung also have a war game. Two parties stand facing each other some distance apart and shoot bird arrows at each other. The Bushmen are very skillful in evading these arrows.

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Farmer Friedrich near Duwib reported the following to me concerning the Hei//om near Tsintsabis: When the village elder dies, his successor makes an incision on his forehead between the eyebrows and squirts the blood toward the east; then he cuts his little finger and sprays the blood toward the west. This is done so that the dead chief in the beyond will see to it that those remaining behind will always have veldkost.

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At the girls' initiation the spirits of the east and west are implored in song to let the young woman always find veldkost.

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"If after a hunting expedition of several days the husband suspects that his wife has been unfaithful to him, he can clear up the situation by means of an 'ordeal.' He takes a resinous root that burns like a candle with a bright flame, in the evening places it in the entrance of his, that is, his wife's hut, and observes the direction in which the long flame points. If the flame points into the interior of the house, adultery occurred during his absence. If it points outside, his wife is innocent."

[60 cont.]

769 territory. Hence, departure from the territory must be announced
614 by the chief or an elder at the ancestral grave without special
ceremonies; similarly, an announcement must be made there
when the kin group again moves into the territory."

423 The property of the kin group, aside from its territory, in-
614 cludes the veldkost, the game, and, above all, the watering
place (1).

1. Von Zastrow and Vedder, op. cit.,
p. 434.

775 As has already been said, the Bushman does not believe
[626] in punishment after death. On the other hand, he is convinced
that the evil that he himself has done will befall him or his dogs
in the same way.

681 In former times banishment from the kin group was likewise
648 customary, and the exile would soon perish, since the Bushman
177 cannot survive by himself in the wilderness for any length of time.
Nowadays, such individuals, just like those who were expelled
from the Bantu tribes, move to land owned by Europeans and find
work there. It is obvious that they do not help to improve the
reputation of the Coloreds.

695 In cases of doubt, the Bushman swears by the great captain:
nu X'u.

681 Instead of formal expulsion, the people may boycott out-
762 laws, who are thereby driven to such despair that they commonly
commit suicide. Suicides also occur for other reasons.

21. Conflicts with Europeans

649 Before the police zone boundary was erected, the Bushmen
found themselves in a latent state of war with their neighbors.
Part of their list of sins will be cited here.

According to Toke, the !Kung near Keibeb in 1925 at-
tacked eight Barotse [Lozi] and killed them, and purportedly ate
them. Later, three Ovambo were attacked by surprise, killed,

RELATIONS WITH OTHER BANDS 155

judge, the head of the band, but in cases of murder, bodily injury resulting in death, and treason the latter is assisted by another man.

The judges can invite or summon witnesses, and after coming to a decision announce it in the presence of all the members of the band.

Murder is punished by death, the sentence being executed by the relatives of the dead man, who kill his slayer with the kirri or by stoning him; treason is also punished by death, and so, in former times, was adultery, although nowadays the adulterer is merely beaten very severely. Theft, the concealment of stolen property, assaults leading to bodily injury, and offences against morality are punished by thrashing. Attempted crimes as well as aiding and abetting receive the same punishment as the accomplished deed, but self-defence is in no way penalized.

How far this description can be accepted as entirely accurate is difficult to say, since Trenk in discussing the legal usages of these Bushmen makes no mention of such a form of procedure. There is no reason, however, to dismiss it as improbable, since the Nama Hottentots, under whose influence the Namib Bushmen have come to a very large extent, have a more elaborate legal system along the same lines, and the Bushman procedure may well have been imitated from this. There is nothing, as far as our present information goes, to suggest the existence of such an organized procedure in any of the other Bushman tribes.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER BANDS

Each band, as has been shown, has its own particular hunting territory, and in general the members of the band keep within their own bounds. But people of neighbouring bands do occasionally have relations with one another. Intermarriage, for example, is a rule among the North-Western tribes, where also a newly-married man generally remains for some time with his wife's people before returning with her to his own band. Visits are apparently also frequent between families connected by marriage, and in any case, as we have seen, a woman always goes back to her parents' home for her first confinement. Trading visits, again, are often undertaken from one band to another, while under special circumstances we may also find the members of several different bands assembled together for a while. It has already been mentioned, for instance, how an outbreak of rinderpest resulting in the death of many cattle drew together